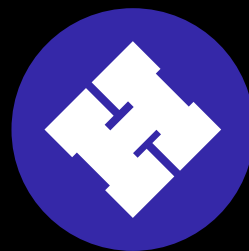# The Politics of Making

London Hackspace · Electromagnetic Field · Hack the Barbican

Martin Dittus, @dekstop
7 July 2013

London Hackspace

@londonhackspace

https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=562585810429682

Electromagnetic Field

@emfcamp

Hack the Barbican

@HackTheBarbican

VISITOR

London Hackspace: "We're not a political organisation. **Politics just distracts from making**" (Hah.)

The reality: many practices and attitudes **that are clearly political.** The obvious ones: open source ethics, rooting for the underdog, hacktivism, …

It's interesting to look at these particular aspects, but they're already fairly well-discussed, so I'd rather talk about something else today...

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To me the **Politics of Making** is also about *Life Choices.*

Crucially: the **"work"** vs. **"life"** barrier.

In most of our lives these are well-articulated boundaries: between *time you get paid for*, and *time where you get to choose*.

The politics of life choices: **choosing how to spend your time.**
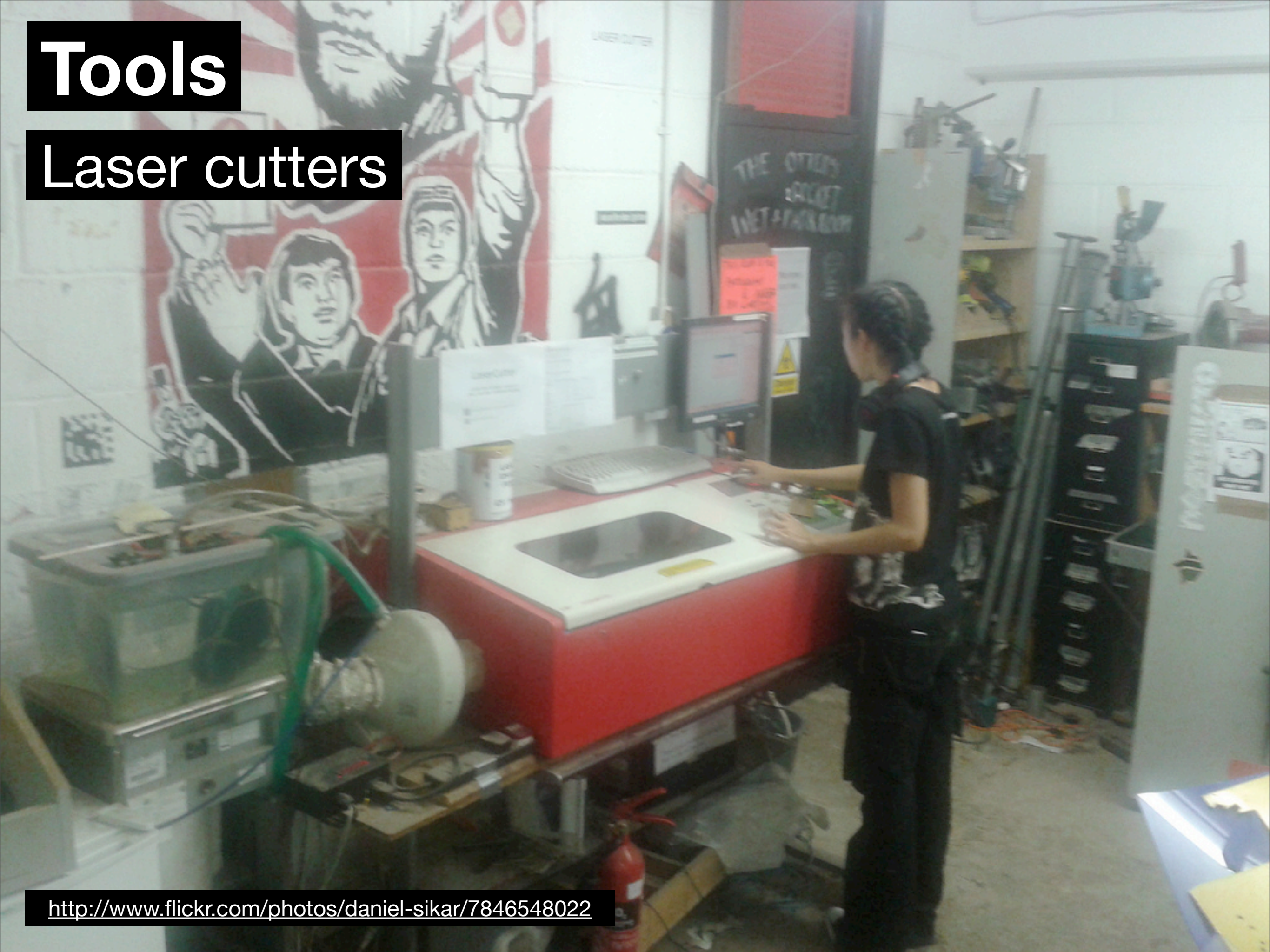
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Choosing **Means of Production**

(Many of you know this part well, so just briefly...)
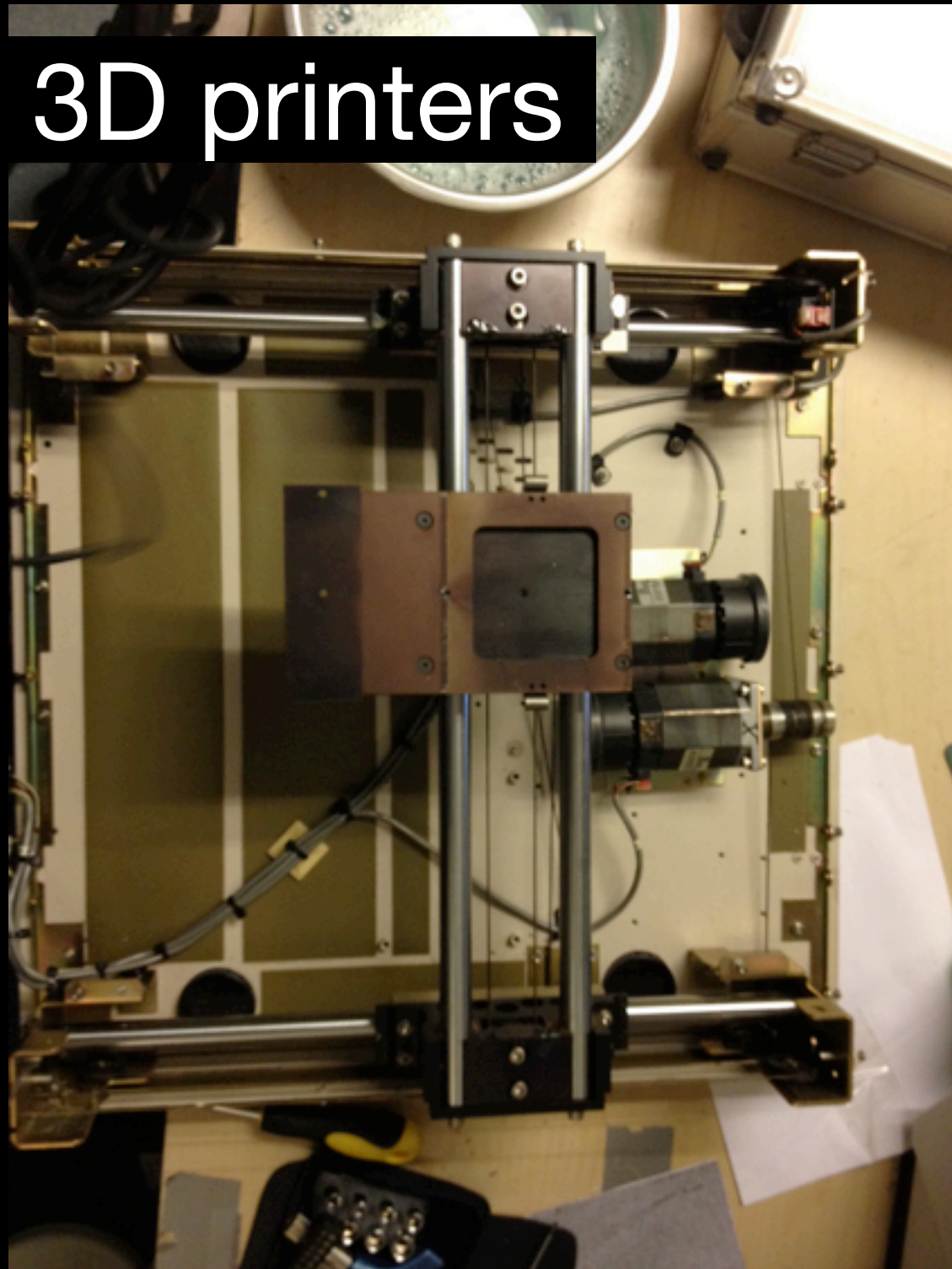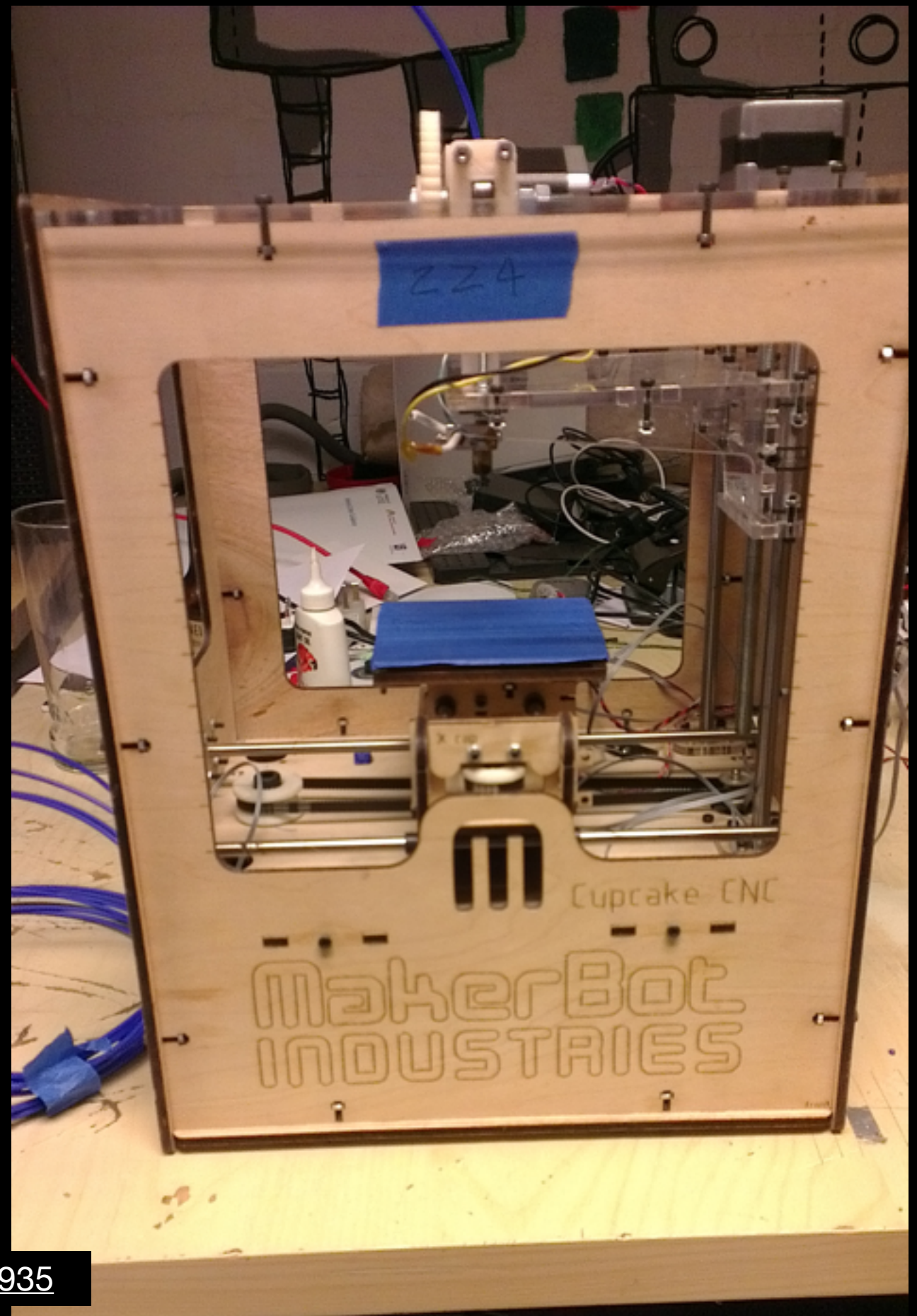
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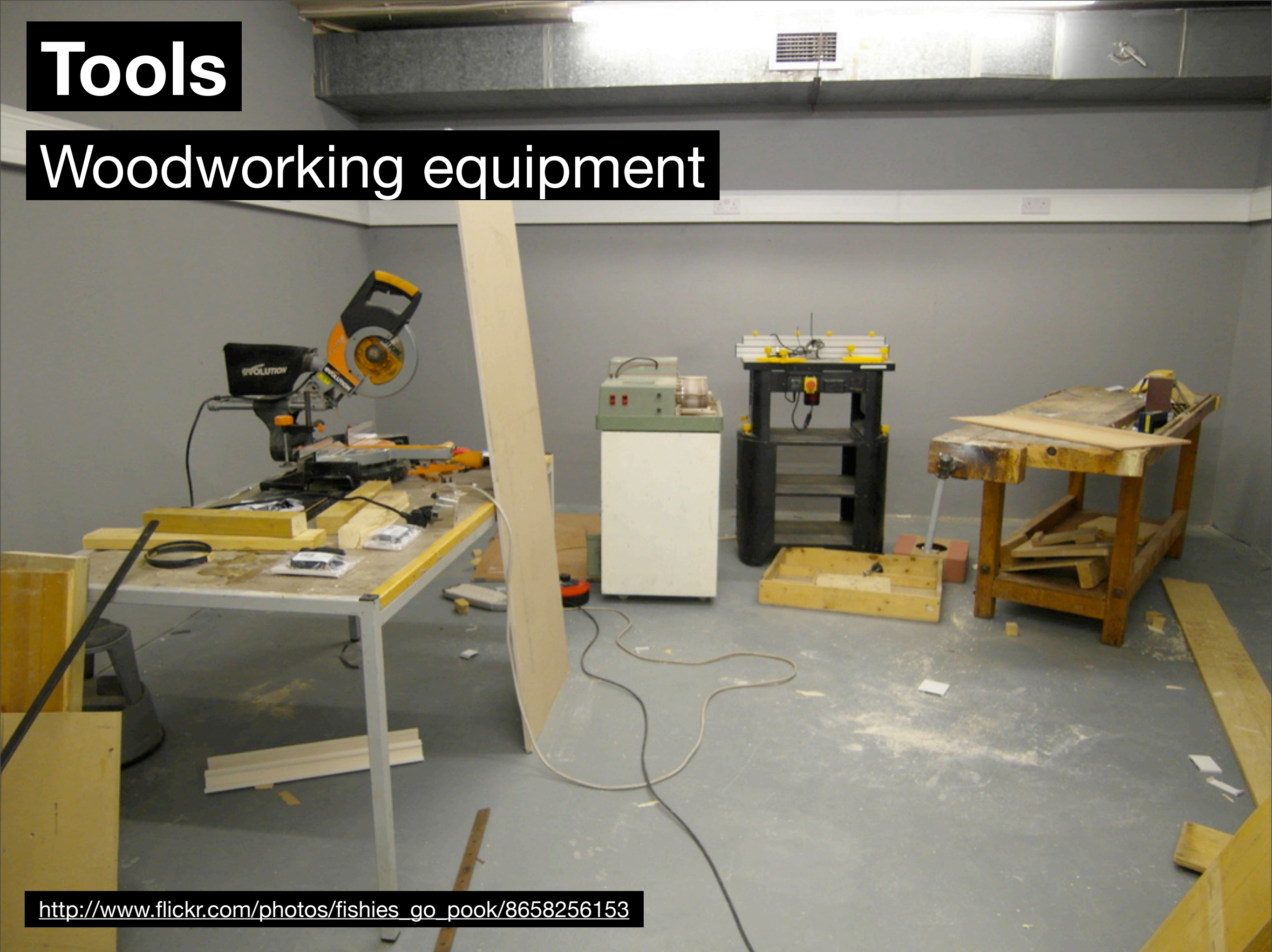
Tools

Laser cutters

Tools

3D printers

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Tools

Woodworking equipment

Tools
Metalworking equipment

Tools

Textiles, food processing, lab equipment, ...

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Equipment

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Things You Want   [edit]

We put in regular orders for electronic components and keep a large stock in the space, if you wish to use components from the space or want to add something to the next order, read the components page.

If you want the space to buy equipment, books or anything else, add it to the Wishlist or to the Pledges.

at the suppliers page

http://wiki.london.hackspace.org.uk/view/Equipment

These are **not** things that you simply **buy**.

They require **dedication**. It takes time to master them.

They come with certain **attitudes**, **ethics**, **aesthetics**.

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Hacking, tinkering, play.

Process is as important as outcomes.

http://www.flickr.com/photos/fishies_go_pook/8054241726

Choosing **Funding**

How do you financially support yourself
as a maker?

Quitting your job to make time for more
important things?

A **scary prospect**.

(You know the options well: donations, grants, sponsors, Kickstarter, pledge drives, selling things, client work, running paid workshops, ... Mixed models: funding your making through other jobs.)

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Choosing **Organising Principles**

"Making" is rarely solitary. ***How should we organise ourselves?***

(This is worth spending a little more time on, because not many people experience this aspect deeply.)

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A key aspect of hacker/maker/open source culture is a problem-solving approach that is **driven by self-motivation**.

A reversal of usual power structures.

The best person to solve a problem is **not** the person with the highest status, but the person whose **abilities match the problem**.

And, most importantly, the person that has a **genuine desire to address it.**

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Consequently, hackers and makers may employ unconventional structures for their organisations.

Focus is on **decentralisation**. The bottom-up approach: where power relations are flipped. Where **People choose their own roles**.

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3. Check the wiki for instructions. Read the warnings. If in doubt, ask.

Making Decisions

4. If something is broken, fix it; don't complain. If you can't fix it, tell the trustees ASAP.
5. If you're doing something major, ask the mailing list first.

Etiquette

6. Do not treat the Hackspace like your home, it is a shared space. Sleeping anywhere on Hackspace property is forbidden. (More info)

Personal Items

http://wiki.london.hackspace.org.uk/view/Rules

Most people never experience such org structures. This is not how "real" work is supposed to happen. (There is no reason it couldn't.)

Consequently the experience **fucks with people's heads.**

The de-programming experience: "What am I supposed to do here? I showed up, but they weren't very well-organised: **nobody could tell me what to do.**"

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The Politics of Making: making time for the things you love doing, making **brave life choices,** and feeling justified in your choices.

Making decisions that go against received wisdom. And demanding that life catches up with you.

Pointing out that these boxes someone built won't fit your aspirations; **making your own boxes**.

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Thank you.

@londonhackspace
@emfcamp
@HackTheBarbican

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